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3) Koizumi to resume official duties today after spending entire summer break at official residence

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)

August 24, 2006

Winding up his summer break, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will resume his official duties today. Since returning from Mongolia on the night of Aug. 11, he has strictly remained at his official

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residence except for his visit to Yasukuni Shrine on Aug. 15. During that period, his secretaries briefed Koizumi on such events as the shooting of a Japanese fishing boat by the Russian Coast Guard and the blackout in the Tokyo metropolitan area on Aug. 14. In response, Koizumi simply ordered thorough measures. "We don't know what he's been doing at his official residence," sources connected with the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) have all said.

Lounging around doing nothing has been Koizumi's way of enjoying his summer vacation. He has done so with the exception of last summer, in which the Lower House election campaigning began. This year, he has not gone to view movies or plays. "Once he resigns as prime minister, he can do whatever he wants to at any time. He has avoided outings that would require heavy security," a Koizumi aide explained.

4) Poll: No surprise from Koizumi's Aug. 15 shrine visit

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)

August 24, 2006

The Tokyo Shimbun tabulated findings from its recent Internet polling of political monitors yesterday, focusing on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's Aug. 15 visit to Yasukuni Shrine. In that Net poll, 85.5% said they had expected Koizumi to visit the shrine, with only 2.8% saying they did not think he would do so. His visit to Yasukuni Shrine on Aug. 15--the anniversary of the end of World War II--was said to be the "last surprise" he would make before stepping down (next month as president of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party and as prime minister). However, the poll shows that his shrine visit that day did not surprise the general public.

Asked whether they support Koizumi's Aug. 15 visit to Yasukuni Shrine, 31.0% answered "yes," with 57.8% saying "no." Even among those who thought he would visit the shrine on Aug. 15, "no" accounted for 56.6%. Among those who support the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, however, "yes" accounted for 58.0%.

The Tokyo Shimbun chose 500 monitors for its third Internet poll on Aug. 16-21 and obtained answers from 429 persons or 85.8%.

Respondents were asked who they would like to become LDP president. In this popularity ranking, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe topped all others at 47.3%, though slightly down from 51.5% in the last survey. Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki, who has criticized Koizumi for his Yasukuni visits and has said he would not visit the shrine, was at 24.5%, substantially up from 13.0% in the last survey. Foreign Minister Taro Aso was at 10.3%, up from 8.8% in the last survey.

5) Abe mulling Japanese equivalent of CIA that reports to prime minister; Strengthening intelligence gathering capability eyed

SANKEI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
August 24, 2006

It was learned yesterday that Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, assuming he will take office as the next prime minister, is looking into the possibility of establishing an external intelligence agency that reports to the prime minister in order to strengthen the government's intelligence gathering capability. The envisaged intelligence agency will apparently be the Japanese equivalent of

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the US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Abe's proposal is motivated by an awareness of the problem that Japan without being able to gather intelligence on its own would not be able to manage well its foreign and security policies, ensure the safety of the nation and the people, and meet national interests.

Currently the government's intelligence apparatus consists of the National Police Agency, the Public Security Investigative Agency (PSIA) and the Cabinet Information Research Office (CIRO). However, these organizations focus their activities on the collection and analyses of intelligence on domestic public safety. Japan, therefore, lagging behind foreign countries regarding the collection of foreign intelligence. Its foreign intelligence collection functions are extremely weak in terms of both personnel and authority. It can be said that intelligence gathering is the area post-Japan has neglected most, as a senior Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) member put it.

In order to prevent international terrorism at the water's edge, it is absolutely necessary for the nation to gather intelligence on its own and share intelligence with intelligence agencies of other countries. Britain has recently succeeded in foiling a terrorist plot to explode civilian airplanes due to cooperation with other countries. Intelligence on North Korea's political and military movements is especially important for Japan.

Abe's plan is, therefore, to establish the envisaged foreign intelligence in the Cabinet Secretariat and have it gather intelligence on international terrorism within and outside Japan and foreign political and military intelligence. The plan also includes the establishment of a system that enables cooperation with intelligence agencies of other countries, such as the CIA and Britain's Military Intelligence 6 (MI6), including exchange of intelligence. Competent personnel will be recruited from the NPA, the Defense Agency, CIRO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the private sector.

6) 2006 LDP presidential race: Junior second chance league members reject Mori faction's leadership in campaigning for Abe

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
August 24, 2006

Discord has emerged between junior and mid-level members of the Parliamentary League to Support a Second Chance and senior members of the Mori faction, to which Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe belongs, over a support system for Abe in the LDP presidential election in September. The Mori faction intends to establish a cross-factional election campaign taskforce involving the parliamentary league. But the parliamentary league, unhappy with the Mori faction's idea, plans to conduct activities independently. The discord between the two groups is a cause of anxiety for the Abe camp.

A meeting was held at a Tokyo hotel yesterday morning between Mori faction executives, including Policy Research Council Chairman Hidenao Nakagawa and former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, and the league's Yuji Yamamoto of the Komura faction and Yoshihide Suga of the Niwa-Koga faction.

In the session, Nakagawa called for united efforts. In response, Yamamoto asked for understanding toward the league's independent

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activities, saying: "Some league members have decided to back Mr. Abe even by risking their factional membership. Cooperating with factions at this point would leave a bad aftertaste. The Mori faction should not take the lead in supporting Mr. Abe." Nakagawa and others asked Suga to head the envisaged campaign taskforce, but Suga declined the offer, saying, "I have conducted my activities separate from any faction."

The Mori faction plans to hold a preliminary meeting of factions supporting Abe tomorrow to officially launch the campaign taskforce on Sept. 1. LDP Tax Commission Chairman Hakuo Yanagisawa of the Niwa-Koga faction is expected to head the taskforce to dilute the Mori flavor.

In tandem with the Mori faction's move, veteran members of various factions, such as former Science and Technology Minister Koji Omi of the Mori faction and Policy Research Council Acting Chairman Akira Amari of the Yamasaki faction, held a meeting in Tokyo on Aug. 23 and decided to back Abe's campaign as a group of senior members.

Meanwhile, the second chance support league is scheduled to hold an expanded executive meeting on Aug. 29 and start full-fledged campaign activities on Sept. 1. Although Suga and others will take part in the campaign taskforce, they will secure a separate office in party headquarters once the election campaign officially kicks off on Sept. 8. This means Abe will have two separate campaign groups.

7) Tanigaki criticizes current state of Japan-China relations, stressing need to conquer parochial nationalism

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
August 24, 2006

Finance Minister Tanigaki, who has declared his candidacy for the Liberal Democratic Party presidency, expressed his views about the current state of relations between Japan and China yesterday in response to questions from reporters in an interview at the Foreign Correspondent's Club of Japan:

"There are cases in which both countries' raw nationalism clash with each other. This situation is against their national interests.... If we nurture sound conservatism, it will be possible to conquer the current parochial nationalism that reminds us of the situation in the 1930s (before World War II)."

Tanigaki cited "the Japanese people's loss of confidence following the bursting of the bubble economy" as one cause for the parochial nationalism in the nation, adding:

"Progressing urbanization and reduced intimacy in people's relationships have deepened (people's) sense of isolation and eventually have served to prompt them to jump at something radical. It might be possible for them to overcome their sense of group affiliation by restoring strong ties in households and communities."

8) New Komeito leader Kanzaki reveals intention to step down from post; Ota most likely to replace him

ASAHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
August 24, 2006

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In response to an interview to the Asahi Shimbun yesterday, New Komeito Representative Takenori Kanzaki revealed his intention to step down from his post in a shakeup of the party's leadership at a convention scheduled for Sept. 30. He said:

"Any organization should be renewed. I served as leader for nine years, one year as head the New Party Peace and eight years as representative of the New Komeito. I would like younger generations to continue to make further efforts."

Since early this year, Kanzaki has been telling persons close to him that he wanted to resign when his term of office expires. Timed to the Sept. 20 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presidential election to choose a successor to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and late September leadership election of the main opposition party Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), in which President Ichiro Ozawa is expected to be reelected, the New Komeito intends to shuffle its own leadership lineup.

Kanzaki stated in the interview: "The LDP and Minshuto will face off (in elections in the future). I want the next party head to make the utmost effort to display our party's political identity."

Acting Secretary General Akihiro Ota is expected to succeed Kanzaki. He served as youth division chief of the religious sect Soka Gakkai, the New Komeito's chief supporter. He has long been regarded as a future leader of the New Komeito.

9) New leadership of New Komeito may find it difficult to maintain ties with LDP

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Slightly abridged)
August 24, 2006

The New Komeito has decided to reshuffle the leadership, promoting Acting Secretary General Akihiro Ota to the party's top post. The aim of the planned reshuffle is to play up the new image of the party by a generational change in line with a political change that will take place following the presidential election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). However, Ota seems to be lacking the ability to bring his party together, with some previously calling for Acting Representative Toshiko Hamayotsu to replace Kanzaki. On assuming the top post, Ota will likely face difficulties such as how to build relations with an "Abe administration, which would have a strong conservative flavor and is calling for completely rewriting the Constitution.

The New Komeito has decided to prepare for next year's elections by altering the executive lineup. The party regards next year when unified local elections and a House of Councillors election will both occur as the year of "great political battles." Ota, who served as youth division chief of the religious sect Soka Gakkai, which is the support body of the New Komeito, has long been touted as Kanzaki's successor.

Under such circumstances, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, the strongest candidate in the LDP presidential race, has already conveyed to the New Komeito his hope that Hamayotsu would be picked as the next party head or that she would be allowed join his new cabinet. Abe apparently aims to take advantage of the high popularity of Hamayotsu in the Soka Gakkai's women's division,

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looking at next year's Upper House election. Concerned about possible internal disorder, Tomio Fujii, supreme advisor to the New Komeito, once looked into the possibility of retaining Kanzaki in his post. Kanzaki, however, strongly refused to remain due to a health condition. Hamayotsu as well turned down an informal offer of the top party post. After consulting with Soka Gakkai, the New Komeito now has decided to pick Ota as party head.

10) A week after fishing boat shooting incident: No prospects for release of seized fishermen; Japan, Russia at odds

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2006

August 23 marked the seventh day since a fishing boat from Nemuro City, Hokkaido, was fired on and seized by a Russian Coast Guard vessel. Backlash against and voices protesting Russia's refusal to release the Japanese crew it seized are spreading among the ruling and opposition parties and the local community. There are no prospects for Russia to release the crew, with Interfax reporting a comment by the Russia Coast Guard that the crew will be detained in Kunashiri until the investigations are over.

Yoshiaki Hara, chairman of the Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee, yesterday called summoned the Russian Acting Ambassador to Japan Galuzin to the Diet and called for the early release of the crew, the return of the fishing boat, and the prevention of a recurrence, noting: "It is excessive to fire on an unarmed fishing boat. There is no justification for such an action."

In response, the acting ambassador noted: "The Russian authorities are now investigating the crew on suspicion of intruding into Russian's territorial waters and poaching. Russia's law is applied in those waters (waters near the Northern Territories)." He also stressed, "The fishing boat, which intruded into our waters with no lights on at night and engaged in poaching, is responsible for what happened."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is calling for the early release of the detained fishermen through various diplomatic channels. However, the Russian side replied, "We are carefully inspecting the vessel. It takes time to investigate the crew through an interpreter." The view is that the inspection of the vessel is to endorse the firer's statement that he did not intend to hit the fisherman." There is information that the investigation will take more than 30 days. MOFA plans to dispatch Senior Vice Minister Katsutoshi Kaneda as early as August 30 to find a breakthrough in the situation.

Some are beginning to question the responsibility of the government, which has no effective means to bring progress in the situation. Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ = Minshuto) Secretary General Hatoyama yesterday called on Foreign Minister Aso to settle the issue at an early date. He later told reporters: "I pointed out that there has been no progress on the Northern Territories issue, and the foreign minister replied, 'I am doing my job properly.' However, his perception is far from that of the people." Lower House member Muneo Suzuki (New Party Daichi), who has long been involved in the Northern Territories issue, pointed out: "During the five years of the Koizumi administration MOFA has not made serious efforts to improve relations with Russia and build confidence between the two countries. It is now being forced to pick up the tabs for its

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negligence."

11) JDA to request 4.86 trillion yen in FY2007 budget, up 1.5%

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
August 24, 2006

The Defense Agency (JDA) will request 4,863.6 billion yen in the FY2007 budget, up 1.5% over the FY2006 initial budget. Although other government agencies have been asked to trim their budget requests, only the JDA has taken a bullish stance, demanding a larger amount of funds for missile defense (MD) given the recent friction with North Korea. The agency has also been calling for a separate budgetary framework to be set up for the realignment of US forces in Japan. Difficult coordination is expected between the JDA and the Finance Ministry.

Regarding the JDA budget request for next fiscal year, a senior official said: "Our request includes only necessary funds for national defense. There is no part to be cut." In the Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management for 2006, the government called for slashing the defense budget by 400 to 600 billion yen over the coming five years, evoking a strong reaction from the JDA.

Behind the Defense Agency's bullish request is the growing tension in areas around Japan in the wake of North Korea's missile launches in July and other issues. For the MD project, the agency calls for 219 billion yen, 1.5 times more than this fiscal year. The funds are to finance additional measures to deal with possible ballistic missiles launches (22.7 billion yen), in addition to maintenance costs for interceptor missiles and radars, which have been included in its past budgetary requests. The budget also includes costs for repairing electronic surveillance aircraft.

Japan's MD, though, is a huge project worth one trillion yen, so

many in the government and the ruling parties have voiced doubts about its cost-benefit performance. One government source categorically said: "Although I admit that there are risks, MD alone should not be treated specially."

The JDA has divided individual plans on US force realignment into those designed to strengthen bases and others to reduce base-hosting communities' burden. In the latter part, the JDA does not present a specific amount of money to fund local economic incentives, as well as a plan to relocate the US Marine Corp's Futenma Air Station in Okinawa to a coastal area of Camp Schwab, saying that it is difficult to determine the budget in advance.

The total cost of US force realignment in Japan is estimated at 3 trillion yen. The JDA has requested that this spending be separated from the defense budget, probably in an attempt to apply pressure to the Finance Ministry, which has expressed opposition to the request by the JDA.

12) JDA to adopt package equipment-purchase system to reduce spending

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
August 24, 2006

The Defense Agency (JDA) decided yesterday to reduce its expenditures by procuring defense equipment in a package starting in

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FY2007. JDA planned to procure five F-2 fighter planes each in FY2007 and FY2008, but it will procure 10 in FY2007 in order to save about 13.6 billion yen by reducing production costs. The JDA also will procure 16 multi-purpose helicopters for the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) in a package and will save approximately 1.9 billion yen.

Regarding US force realignment costs, the JDA will include 15.9 billion yen in its budget request, including research expenses for relating the GSDF Central Readiness Command to Camp Zama.

13) Yamaguchi gov. to accept US carrier-based wing redeployment to Iwakuni

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2006

Yamaguchi Prefecture's Governor Sekinari Nii will call at the Defense Facilities Administration Agency and the Foreign Ministry today to tell the government that he will accept the planned redeployment of US carrier-borne fighter jets to the US Marine Corps' Iwakuni Air Station in the city of Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture, in the process of realigning US forces in Japan. Meanwhile, Iwakuni is opposed to their redeployment to the city, so Nii has so far avoided clarifying whether he would accept it. Nii will come up to Tokyo and ask the government to take budgetary action to resume civilian flights to and from the base. He will meet DFAA Director General Iwao Kitahara and other government officials to tell them that he will accept the redeployment of fighters to Iwakuni.

In his petition, Nii notes that the government has now made a cabinet decision on the realignment of US forces in Japan. "I understand that the realignment will be carried out in a steady way," Nii states in the letter. He also notes that his proposal to resume an airport for commercial flights is "closely linked to US force realignment." With this, the governor will ask the government to bear the total cost of new facilities.

14) Defense Agency to request PAC-3 deployment funding ahead of schedule

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2006

In the wake of the launches of ballistic missiles by North Korea, the Defense Agency decided yesterday to incorporate in its fiscal

2007 budgetary requests outlays for an early deployment of some PAC-3 ground-based interceptor missiles under the missile defense (MD) system. The agency originally planned to earmark funds in fiscal 2008 and 2009 for producing dozens of PAC-3 missiles under a licensing system. But the agency has now decided to purchase them from the United States. The MD-related budgetary request, including the frontloading portion, will come to 220 billion yen.

The Defense Agency plans to deploy PAC-3 missiles at the Air Self-Defense Force's Iruma base in Saitama Prefecture by the end of fiscal 2006 as the first case. The number of missiles is limited. Following Pyongyang's test launching of seven missiles on July 5, Tokyo has asked Washington to deploy PAC-3 missiles in Japan on a priority basis, citing a lack of missiles. The US has responded positively to Japan.

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15) US Marine Commander declares possible use of Ospreys at new Okinawa base at Camp Schwab

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2006

Brigadier General Joseph Medina of the US Marine Corps on Okinawa (commander of Camp Butler) stated on Aug. 23 that there was a possibility Ospreys, an aircraft that can take off and land vertically, might be used at the new Marines base to be built on the shores of Camp Schwab, as planned under the US forces realignment agreement. The reply came to a question by Japanese Communist Party lawmaker Akamine and others who were present as members of a special Lower House committee on Okinawa and Northern Territories, who had been invited to visit the Marine base.

Akamine also asked why under the USFJ realignment plan was the length of the new facility extended to 1,800 meters, when under the SACO plan agreed to by Japan and the US in 1996 the length was supposed to be 1,500 meters.

Brigadier General Medina revealed that in the USFJ realignment talks, the US had requested a 2,000-meter long facility, but "(as a result of the talks,) it became 1,800 meters," he noted. "An 1,800-meter runway is long enough to be used during a contingency by C-130s (transports) and Ospreys," he added.

The US Marines have already revealed a plan to deploy Ospreys to Okinawa starting in 2012. However, the Japanese government has repeatedly explained, "At this point, nothing concrete has been settled."

The statement by Brigadier General Medina indicates once more the danger that Ospreys will be operated at the new base.

The members of the special committee on Okinawa and Northern Territories starting on Aug. 22 have been touring US bases and other areas on Okinawa. In addition to Akimine, the group includes members of the Liberal Democratic Party, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) and New Komeito.

16) LDP eyes legislation for SDF missions overseas without UN resolution

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
August 24, 2006

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party yesterday held a meeting of its defense policy subcommittee to review a draft bill for a permanent law allowing Japan to send the Self-Defense Forces overseas for international peace cooperation. The subcommittee, with former Defense Agency Director General Shigeru Ishiba presiding, approved the draft bill. The legislative measure does not necessarily require a United Nations resolution or an international organization's request. In addition, the legislation eases the government's guidelines for SDF personnel's use of weapons or the rules of engagement (ROE). It is intended for Japan to make its own proactive contributions to international peace.

The government has so far created a number of separate laws in order for Japan to take part in international peace cooperation activities

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overseas, such as humanitarian reconstruction assistance in Iraq. However, Japan cannot respond quickly with such legislative steps, according to an agency official. So the government needs a permanent law to prompt and facilitate SDF activities overseas.

The draft SDF bill allows the government to send SDF troops to engage in overseas activities if and when there is a UN resolution or an international organization's request. In addition, the legislation also allows the government to do so without authorization from the United Nations or any other international organizations if and when the government recognizes it necessary for Japan to conduct activities overseas under the banner of international cooperation.

Japan has carried out humanitarian reconstruction assistance, ceasefire surveillance, and logistical support for foreign forces under the UN Peacekeeping Cooperation Law and the Iraq Special Measures Law. In addition, the draft bill also incorporates security missions and ship inspections. The scope of security missions includes possible activities intended to maintain public security in Iraq, and ship inspections are intended to prevent terrorist movements and ensure the effectiveness of economic sanctions.

SDF members on overseas missions are currently not allowed to use weapons even in the event unattended Japanese nationals or independently operating troops from a foreign country in cooperative relations with Japan come under attack.

The draft bill allows SDF personnel to use weapons in that case if they are in their operational area.

DONOVAN